

LINCOLN, NE -- Congressman Jeff Fortenberry, as a member of the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) delegation, last week concluded a series of meetings with Pakistan's President Asif Zardari, Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, and key members of the Pakistani parliament. The United States delegation also reviewed the security situation near the Afghan border.

"The House Democracy Partnership has recently strengthened ties with Pakistan's parliament," Fortenberry said. "The institution is attempting to reassert democratic processes in the country as evidenced by an agreement reached between Pakistan's political parties, essentially restoring the country's 1973 constitution and the authority of the prime minister. This agreement realized a long-sought achievement bolstering Pakistan's democratic institutions. The Pakistanis are eager for a balanced governance model and hopefully the House Democracy Partnership may aid in building the technical capacities of the legislature."

Fortenberry also assessed security operations in the North West Frontier Province, near the Afghan border. This assessment included a meeting at the U.S. Consulate in Peshawar, which today came under attack by militants.

"The Pakistani military is continuing significant security operations and showing a will to fight that is critical to regional stability and U.S.-led NATO efforts in Afghanistan," said Fortenberry.

Fortenberry also held official House Democracy Partnership meetings in Georgia and Bangladesh with President Mikheil Saakashvili and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, respectively. HDP is a bipartisan 20-member commission established by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2005 to support the development of independent democratic legislatures. Fortenberry is also a member of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia.

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